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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NSU's Roberts Center Awarded Grant

The Joseph Jenkins Roberts Center for African Diaspora Studies at Norfolk State University was awarded \$150,000 for its project, "Sold Down River: Making the Invisible, Visible," by the Virginia African American Cultural Center, Inc. (VAACC) as part of the VAACC's Virginia Tourism Corporation grant. The Roberts Center's project is in collaboration with the Sargeant Memorial Collection at Norfolk Public Libraries (SMC) and the Roadstead Montessori High School in Norfolk.

The grant funding will support the development of a database and accompanying articles that will capture the history of the domestic slave trade leaving the port of Norfolk. This database will reveal the names of enslaved people and other important data to assist those conducting research on the domestic slave trade or genealogical research.

More than 20,000 people were transported to New Orleans from Norfolk who, heretofore, were unnamed and therefore invisible. This project seeks to make the unknown visible by creating an integrated database that includes the names, ages, occupations, physical descriptions, origins of the enslaved people, and their eventual destinations. Moreover, the names of owners, the people to whom they were sold in New Orleans, and the costs of the sales will be retrieved by mining ship manifests, notary records, sales documents, and other materials.

This work is inspired by the "Reparative Genealogy" project that centers on the history of enslaved people by providing descendants with an online database as a first step in finding their ancestors. Records of the movement of thousands of individuals have silenced the names of those who were removed to the Lower South in an effort to commoditize people. This project reverses this trend by revealing the names, combining data from a wide variety of sources that promises to connect people to their past and reveal to historians the more complete story of forced human migration in 19th century America.

About the Roberts Center

The Joseph Jenkins Roberts Center was founded by Dr. Cassandra Newby-Alexander and the Department of History to serve as a center of excellence for the study of the African Diaspora at



Norfolk State University. The center has put on a number of academic and local history conferences related to historic anniversaries of events central to the African-American community. The center is currently directed by Drs. Stephanie Richmond and Patrick Mbajekwe.

About Norfolk State University

Norfolk State University is a comprehensive urban public institution committed to transforming students' lives through exemplary teaching, research, and service. Offering a supportive academic and culturally diverse environment for all, the University empowers its students to turn their aspirations into reality and achieve their full potential as well-rounded, resourceful citizens and leaders for the 21st century. NSU plays a vital economic and social role in the City of Norfolk, the Hampton Roads region, and across Virginia.